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EPA Mid-Atlantic Region Headlines

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

***** DAILY HOT LIST *****

Freedom Industries plans site cleanup

CHARLESTON GAZETTE CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Freedom Industries, the company whose chemical storage tank leak made water unusable for 300,000 people in West Virginia, says it won't know exactly how to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater at its Elk River facility until all storage tanks are torn down and removed from the site. On Monday, Freedom submitted a 37-page "remediation plan" to the state Department of Environmental Protection. The report — prepared for Freedom by Pennsylvania-based Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc. — spells out how the bankrupt company plans to clean up the site where the leak started. The consultants said the cleanup plan is designed to "eliminate current and future threats to human health and the environment related to the MCHM [chemical] release." "The remediation plan submitted by Freedom Industries is another important step in making sure proper procedures are put into place to effectively address any public health and environmental issues at the spill site," said Kelley Gillenwater, a DEP spokeswoman. The report reveals that the chemicals that leaked from a storage tank on Jan. 9 flowed north into a culvert pipe and a cobble fill drainage area before pouring into the Elk River and the West Virginia American Water treatment plant. The cobble fill was designed to capture surface water before it enters the river. "Most of the contamination is on the northern end," Tom Aluise, a DEP spokesman, said.

EPA drastically underestimates methane released at drilling sites

L.A. TIMES Drilling operations at several natural gas wells in southwestern Pennsylvania released methane into the atmosphere at rates that were 100 to 1,000 times greater than federal regulators had estimated, new research shows. Using a plane that was specially equipped to measure greenhouse gas emissions in the air, scientists found that drilling activities at seven well pads in the booming Marcellus shale formation emitted 34 grams of methane per second, on average. The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that such drilling releases between 0.04 grams and 0.30 grams of methane per second. The study, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, adds to a growing body of research that suggests the EPA is gravely underestimating methane emissions from oil and gas operations. The agency is expected to issue its own analysis of methane emissions from the oil and gas sector as early as Tuesday, which will give outside experts a chance to assess how well regulators

understand the problem. Carbon dioxide released by the combustion of fossil fuels is the biggest contributor to climate change, but methane — the chief component of natural gas — is about 20 to 30 times more potent when it comes to trapping heat in the atmosphere. Methane emissions make up 9% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions and are on track to increase, according to the White House. The Pennsylvania study was launched in an effort to understand whether the measurements of airborne methane matched up with emissions estimates based on readings taken at ground level, the approach the EPA and state regulators have historically used. Researchers flew their plane about a kilometer above a 2,800 square kilometer area in southwestern Pennsylvania that included several active natural gas wells. Over a two-day period in June 2012, they detected 2 grams to 14 grams of methane per second per square kilometer over the entire area. The EPA's estimate for the area is 2.3 grams to 4.6 grams of methane per second per square kilometer.

Shale gas limits debated

BALTIMORE SUN Scientist urges more distance between water wells, drilling rigs. Maryland regulators are weighing some of the strictest limits in the country on shale gas drilling, but a scientist Monday suggested they still may not go far enough to protect drinking water wells from contamination by methane leaking from drilling sites. Gas drilling rigs would generally have to be at least 2,000 feet from public or private water wells under rules being considered by the Maryland Department of the Environment, officials said Monday during a meeting of the governor's advisory commission on the issue. But Avner Vengosh, a researcher at Duke University, told commission members that studies he and his colleagues have done in states bordering Maryland and elsewhere found that domestic water wells were more likely to be fouled with potentially explosive levels of methane gas if they were within one kilometer — 3,280 feet — of a drilling rig. Water wells farther away rarely had problems, he said. "If I were in your position, I would try to be as cautious as possible," Vengosh said. The debate over well protections came as the advisory commission nears the end of a three-year study of the promise and potential problems associated with drilling for natural gas in shale formations beneath western Maryland. While thousands of shale gas wells have been drilled in neighboring Pennsylvania alone, supporting tens of thousands of jobs, the O'Malley administration has put drilling on hold until it can determine whether it can be done safely, citing concerns about environmental and health impacts. The 15-member panel is expected to issue a draft final report by the end of June.

WV American Water: No trace of MCHM in treatment plant

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL After some allegations of crude MCHM remaining in the water treatment plant, West Virginia American Water said in an April 14 news release samples from its filters have come back at non-detect levels. The water company has been in the process of replacing its carbon filters in the Kanawha Valley water treatment plant, something it said it does, but had never done at the caliber with which it has proceeded with after the chemical spill that affected nine counties. According to the water company, samples taken from the first two filters completed in the carbon change-out project showed "no detection of MCHM." The company said in a statement 16 water samples from various stages in the water

treatment process over a five hour period were tested --- sent to Eurofins Lancaster Laboratories, Inc. -- a lab used by the WV TAP (West Virginia Testing Assessment Project) team brought into the state by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. The test results have been shared with the West Virginia National Guard, West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and the WV TAP team. "The filters are being put back into services, and testing will be conducted on filtered water following each subsequent filter change-out," according to a press release from the water company. "Testing is performed down to a .38 parts per billion reporting level, which is the lowest existing detection level to date."

Water specialist won't drink the water

CHARLESTON GAZETTE One water treatment specialist said Monday that Crude MCHM continues to be released by West Virginia American Water's carbon filters, and he won't drink the tap water until all 16 are replaced. "I knew that the filters at West Virginia American that removed the MCHM eventually are eventually going to desorb all of that material," environmental engineer and chemist Dayton Carpenter told the Rotary Club of Charleston. "And sure enough as they're doing the testing right now, it is desorbing. It's going out into the system at very low concentration. But to me, we're talking months." Test results made public in March showed that trace amounts of MCHM were detected in treated water coming from the facility, but spokeswoman Laura Jordan told the Gazette that "wasn't unexpected," in an earlier report. The water company started changing its filters two weeks ago. Jordan said Monday that two have been completely replaced and samples taken from those filters show no trace of Crude MCHM -- the coal processing chemical that leaked into the Elk River in January, contaminating the drinking water for 300,000 Kanawha Valley residents. Carpenter is president of Carpenter Treatment Solutions, LLC, and has designed water treatment facilities for 35 years. He is also a licensed remediation specialist for hazardous waste remediation at brownfield sites. Carpenter wrote multiple newspaper editorials during the water crisis, because he "couldn't sit on the sidelines," he said. He said one of his concerns in the days following the leak was the lack of information about Crude MCHM. "It seemed to be a pretty benign material until you start smelling licorice in your tap. And then your life changes," Carpenter said. Carpenter said his first instinct would have been to close intakes at the treatment plant. But, West Virginia American Water's distribution, which includes many systems Carpenter designed, wouldn't allow for that, he said.

EPA to drill wells to investigate Sandston pollution

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will drill test wells in the Sandston area to get a better understanding of groundwater pollution there, a spokeswoman said Monday. The drilling will occur in late spring or early summer, said EPA spokeswoman Bonnie Smith. "We are still very early in the investigation," Smith said. The probe could last months. The EPA is investigating whether people in a roughly one-block area at East Williamsburg Road and Garland Avenue are threatened by tetrachloroethene, an industrial chemical suspected of causing cancer. The EPA is examining that area because a contractor's nearby test well found high concentrations of the chemical in groundwater. EPA officials left fliers in the area in January telling residents about the pollution and investigation. The EPA has determined there is no need for emergency action such as trucking in drinking water, Smith said. People in the area under investigation drink county water, not well water. "Safe drinking water is

not an issue at this place,” Smith said. Workers for the EPA tested water in a small number of wells outside the study area, and they tested the air in places including the crawl spaces of several homes, but they did not find concentrations of the chemical high enough to pose health concerns, Smith said. Now the agency will attempt to find the source and extent of the underground pollution. “We looked at short-term concerns” early in the investigation, Smith said. The plan now is “to assess any potential long-term concerns.” Options down the road range from a cleanup if pollution is found at levels that pose health concerns to leaving the chemicals in the ground if they are not in unhealthy concentrations. “We need to identify the extent of the contamination and at that point to determine what needs to be done,” Smith said.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

The List: 10 Facts About Household Energy Usage in New Jersey In a state with some of the nation’s highest energy costs, how people and businesses use and pay for electricity and other types of energy is always a top priority for policymakers. It has led to initiatives to encourage more power plants to be built in New Jersey, to develop renewable resources like solar, and to reduce energy consumption by customers of the state’s gas and electric utilities. Household consumption ranks third when it comes to total energy usage in the state, accounting for 23.7 percent overall, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Households rely on a mix of fuels, including electricity, natural gas, and petroleum products, among others. Transportation ranks first, at 39.1 percent, hardly surprising given that New Jersey has the longest average commute in the country. The commercial sector accounts for 25.9 percent; the industrial community, 11.3 percent.

GREEN PHILLY BLOG

Where My Peers At? Why Philly Spring Cleanup Day Matters GPB has been hosting a park cleanup at the 8th & Poplar fields for the past 3 years, when anywhere from 7-25 volunteers arrive to pick up trash, dispose of empty 40’ s, and ultimately better our community. While the volunteers that show up are great, I’ve noticed the majority of faces helping out are community groups, sustainability professionals and personal friends. Out of 30-40 teammates, only a couple of my kickball and softball teammates volunteer in these efforts. And although the PR efforts have reached Saturday morning news level, many friends are unaware about the annual citywide cleanup until I personally mention it to them. As I was cleaning under a park bench on a beautiful Saturday, I considered why more peers don’t participate in these cleanups. I’ve even invited the Sport & Social Club organizers to assist with no avail. Where’s the disconnect between a field we use for 20 Sundays per year and our obligation to improve its condition? From researching another post, I’m surprised to find the balance of passionate community members who want our streets clean versus the indifferent mentality that things will become dirty again – and often, it’s the same person. Walk through the Center City streets, and notice how clean they can be when paid workers sweep litter off the streets. The socio-economic differences as we leave center city zone into bordering neighborhoods is obvious.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Eagle webcam enthralls viewers while aiding research On a recent afternoon, Bill Powers perked up with excitement when his PixController Inc. webcam of the bald eagles' nest in Hays reached an impressive benchmark. "Wow, it hit a million," he called out in his Murrysburg office. "This is great for Pittsburgh. We have a viral page." The PixController Inc. eagles' nest cam, broadcasting online since Dec. 20, and an osprey cam near Portland, Northampton County, are part of a pilot project involving the company and the Pennsylvania Game Commission in a public-private partnership. The goal is to use wildlife cams to advance research and education. But the popularity of the eagle cam has soared beyond expectations, capturing the public interest and imagination

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Pitt to invest \$37.5 million in sustainability program The University of Pittsburgh has earmarked \$37.5 million to start a multi-disciplinary sustainability program, Pitt officials announced Monday. The program begins on the 10th anniversary of the launch of Pitt's Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation in the Swanson School of Engineering. It will extend sustainability initiatives throughout the university and start graduate and certificate programs Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg said the university's commitment to sustainability was inspired by Pitt alumni John C. "Jack" Mascaro, founder and chair of Mascaro Construction Company L.P., and John A. Swanson, founder of ANSYS, Inc., both of whom also have contributed to the university's investment in the sustainability initiative. Pitt officials said they will tap various endowments as well as current funds to support sustainability-related academics and research.

Ford City must determine solution to pay off \$21,000 in water supply fines It has been three weeks since Ford City Council voted to move ahead and build a water plant — but it still must resolve how to pay fines levied against the borough by the Department of Environmental Protection because of project delays. The borough is continuing to amass \$250 in daily fines for missing DEP deadlines and must pay \$21,000 in penalties by today. But that's not going to happen until a meeting is arranged between officials from DEP and Ford City to discuss the matter. Council has not received word from DEP confirming if last month's vote to build a water plant has put a stop to the \$250 additional daily fines, which began on March 4 because of council's delay in providing DEP with a decision about its water source option. DEP had required council to explore options of building a water facility or contracting with Pennsylvania-American Water. An earlier option of contracting with Manor Township was taken off the table by the DEP because Manor doesn't have the capacity to support Ford City. During Monday's meeting, Councilman Gene Banks asked Borough Engineer Jim Garvin: "What can we do to stop the bleeding?" The fines are due on the 15th of the month, Councilman Jerry Miklos said, and asked if Garvin planned to pay them. "I said I'd pay past fines," Garvin said.

Obama, Biden visit on economy shifts from Leetsdale to North Fayette A community college campus in North Fayette will host President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden on Wednesday, the White House announced on Monday. The pair plan to talk about job training in the Community College of Allegheny County's West Hills Center. Obama and Biden had planned to visit Leetsdale to talk about the economy but scrapped that plan because the 150,000-square-foot community college could more easily accommodate a presidential visit, a White House official said...Obama in January put Biden in charge of creating a \$500 million competitive grant program aimed at helping community colleges to improve their job training

programs. The two-year colleges are considered a key resource in educating a workforce for new jobs, such as those from the Marcellus shale industry.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

Fracking forum will focus on the economic impact of drilling There's still time to register for a discussion forum – "A Frank Conversation about Fracking" - coming up this week on Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. in Montgomery County. Co-hosted by StateImpact Pennsylvania partner station WHYY and the Bernard Wolfman Civil Discourse Project in Elkins Park, the conversation will focus on the economic impact of Pennsylvania's natural gas boom. Speakers include Deborah Lawrence Rogers, founder of consulting firm EnergyPolicyForum, and William Freeman, a former committee chairman of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, the state's biggest gas industry trade group. The forum will be moderated by Chris Satullo, WHYY's vice president of news and civil dialog. For more about the discussion, you can read his recent commentary on NewsWorks.org:

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Energy pundit to speak at Lehigh More than a century ago, Pennsylvania witnessed the birth of an industry when the first oil well was drilled by Colonel Edwin Drake in Titusville. Today, because of the Marcellus Shale reserves, the Keystone State is again leading the way, this time in a natural gas revolution. "It is kind of coming full circle to come back to Pennsylvania and have the mighty Marcellus as the epicenter of the American natural gas business," said Daniel Yergin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and energy pundit who will speak at Lehigh University in Bethlehem Wednesday.

Letter: DEP's new meaning The April 4 story, "Shale gas pollution slips by," detailed how the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regulators allow many fracking violations to go unreported. Environmental protection? Sounds more like the Department of Environmental Pollution.

EASTON EXPRESS TIMES

Rail car derailment cleanup to begin soon in Upper Mount Bethel Township Cleanup is scheduled to begin Tuesday on the rail cars that came off their tracks Saturday afternoon in Northampton County, the train operator said today. The six cars on the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad train that derailed along Slateford Road in Upper Mount Bethel Township were carrying clean sand used in hydraulic fracturing, officials said. That's the method being used to extract natural gas from the Marcellus shale geological foundation underlying much of Pennsylvania and parts of neighboring states. "The cause is still under investigation and cleanup efforts, we're hoping, will start tomorrow," Lorie Ransom, superintendent with the Genesee Valley Transportation subsidiary, said this afternoon. "There's no danger to the public." Northampton County Emergency Management Director Bob Mateff confirmed the load was labeled as sand. Had the material already been used for fracking, a process that can involve dangerous chemicals, it would have been labeled differently and warranted an emergency cleanup. "From a response standpoint, sand's sand," he said today, "whether you use it for fracking or whether you use it for filling up a beach." The train's destination was the Scranton-Carbondale, Pa., area, Ransom said. That section of track is closed to rail traffic, according to Mateff. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection did not respond to the

incident, spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. Delaware-Lackawanna was obtaining permits for the cleanup from the state, according to Mateff. He was unsure of a timeline for the work. The cleanup is being handled by Hulcher Professional Services Inc., which has its headquarters in Denton, Texas.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS

Townships officials talk mowers, Marcellus shale, more at Hershey conference Whether they're seeking tips on road repair or how to use the latest Google Earth technology, 2,500 township officials from across the state should have something to take home from the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors conference in Hershey this week. This is the 92nd annual educational conference and trade show offered by PSATS, which offers dozens of workshops daily and 300 indoor and outdoor vendors from April 13-16 at the Hershey Lodge. Monday's session opened with remarks by Gov. Tom Corbett; Chris Abruzzo, state Department of Environmental Protection secretary; and George Greig, state agriculture secretary. A workshop on Google Earth was of interest to Palmer Brown, a Blair Township, Blair County supervisor. "I use it now – it's a good way of looking at pictures of the township and what's happening," Brown said, along with seeing visually how new development will fit in with existing activity in the township. Brown said Gov. Tom Corbett told municipalities that they will be getting more liquid fuels tax money through the new transportation plan. "It's going to work out well for our township," Brown said, which is currently stressed by infrastructure needs like water and sewer, in addition to roads. Brown said he also likes meeting other township officials with whom he can discuss common concerns. "Their problems are often same as ours. Perhaps they have a different way of solving them," he said.

Patty Kim calls for Steelton authority resignations, suggests suing former water plant operator

The surprise environmental sanctions against Steelton prompted a "get out of my face" from a borough official and a call for resignations and a lawsuit from a sitting state representative. State Rep. Patty Kim called for the resignations of Steelton Water Authority board members Monday night as a measure to help build back the public's trust, which she deemed "broken" following recently announced drinking water violations. "The majority of board members should resign to restore the integrity of the board," said Kim, D-Harrisburg, following the meeting. "What happened was pretty major. Public health was compromised, and I think we need to restore the faith in the water authority." Speaking to a crowd of more than 40 people packed into borough council's chambers, Kim also called for officials to sue the water plant's former chief operator for the authority's \$55,2000 fine for violations the state Department of Environmental Protection found, including inadequate disinfection of the intestinal parasite *Giardia lamblia*. Kim — who is facing Harrisburg resident Gina Johnson Robeson in the May primary — was one of numerous attendees that aired concerns and asked questions about the actions that led up to the drinking water and reporting violations contained in a recent consent order and agreement between DEP and the water authority.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Feds talk: How do they feel about merit-based pay systems? We asked federal workers in a survey last week how they would feel about the government transitioning to a merit-based pay system in which they would only receive raises for performing above expectations. The Partnership for Public Service proposed a similar plan in a report this month, calling for a federal pay system that would compensate workers at a level on par with their cohorts in the private sector, with extra pay for only those who perform above expectations. Federal-worker unions have opposed the plan, saying the current pay system has served the nation well. The federal government has experimented with pay-for-performance programs in the past, particularly with the Defense Department's National Security Personnel System, which Congress canceled in 2009. The program failed in part because employees did not trust that it would work fairly, according to unions and other federal-worker groups.

Unexpected loose gas from fracking (Graphic) A survey over hydraulic fracturing sites in Pennsylvania revealed drilling operations releasing

plumes of methane 100 to 1,000 times higher than what the EPA expects from that stage of drilling, according to a study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

WAMU-RADIO (NPR)

D.C. Wins Praise For Energy Star Buildings (April 11) This week the Environmental Protection Agency released its annual rankings for cities with the most Energy Star certified buildings, and the D.C. metro area ranks number two on the list, just behind Los Angeles. But what does it take to make buildings energy efficient? One local building serves as an example of what it takes to earn an Energy Star label — and why D.C. could soon take the top spot on the EPA's list. It should come as no surprise that a trade association dedicated to architecture would be proud of showing off its building. But the windowless room Mike O'Brien is showing off is hardly a showpiece — it's little more than a closet holding an office chair and a computer. "So this is it," he says, as he sits down. O'Brien is the chief financial officer for the American Society of Landscape Architects, and despite the distinct lack of style or design around him, the room is a big part of what makes the entire ASLA headquarters a model for the EPA's Energy Star program. It's the control center for the building's automation system, a system that automatically turns lights and the heating and cooling system on and off depending on the time of day and who's in the building. "This essentially controls everything," he says. The ASLA headquarters — which is located on Eye Street, just north of Chinatown — earned its Energy Star certification in 2013 by scoring an 89 out of 100 on the EPA's building performance scale. To get certified, a building must score a 75 or higher on the scale, which compares a property's energy usage to other properties of similar type, accounting for things like occupancy and size.

DELAWARE

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Public to comment on new FEMA flood maps Dewey Beach — The Federal Emergency

Management Agency has proposed changes to Dewey Beach flood maps. Property owners have 90 days to review the maps and appeal the changes. The period began March 12 and will last until June 10. David King, planning commission chair, said changes to the maps can change the insurance rates, negatively or positively, of 30 to 50 properties. Some of the proposed changes are a result of improved technology used to measure the topography, King said. "Along Route 1 it used to be a hard line, but because the instruments measuring the topography is so much better, it's now a serpentine path," he said. "I'm not surprised by the new line. They clearly didn't take into count local topography in the past." King said different construction standards are established for each zone, which would come into play only for new construction or a significant renovation. Bud Clark, an insurance agent for The Williams Agency in Rehoboth Beach, confirmed a structure would be subject to different insurance rates if flood zone changes.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Freedom Industries plans site cleanup CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Freedom Industries, the company whose chemical storage tank leak made water unusable for 300,000 people in West Virginia, says it won't know exactly how to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater at its Elk River facility until all storage tanks are torn down and removed from the site. On Monday, Freedom submitted a 37-page "remediation plan" to the state Department of Environmental Protection. The report — prepared for Freedom by Pennsylvania-based Civil & Environmental Consultants Inc. — spells out how the bankrupt company plans to clean up the site where the leak started. The consultants said the cleanup plan is designed to "eliminate current and future threats to human health and the environment related to the MCHM [chemical] release." "The remediation plan submitted by Freedom Industries is another important step in making sure proper procedures are put into place to effectively address any public health and environmental issues at the spill site," said Kelley Gillenwater, a DEP spokeswoman. The report reveals that the chemicals that leaked from a storage tank on Jan. 9 flowed north into a culvert pipe and a cobble fill drainage area before pouring into the Elk River and the West Virginia American Water treatment plant. The cobble fill was designed to capture surface water before it enters the river. "Most of the contamination is on the northern end," Tom Aluisse, a DEP spokesman, said.

Coal's future must be discussed, Democratic House candidates say The two Democrats running for the 2nd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives said Monday that coal will continue to play a role in West Virginia, but the state's leaders need to talk more about different aspects of the future. "We appreciate that coal has been the bedrock of our state," Meshea Poore, a delegate from Kanawha County, said in a conversation with Gazette editors. But Poore, whose grandfather was a coal miner, hopes state leaders look more closely at all sources of future energy, including gas, windmills and solar power. Nick Casey, a former chairman of the state Democratic Party, believes concerns about coal differ throughout the 2nd District, which runs from the Potomac River to the Ohio River. "In Shepherdstown, Martinsburg and the Eastern Panhandle, there is not a coal tradition. In other areas, the people would not be there if it wasn't for coal," Casey said. While he said, "We don't want to slam the door all the way on coal," he also said he doesn't want the coal-producing areas of West Virginia to suffer problems "like the

steel mills in Pittsburgh. They all got shut down.” Casey, a lifelong resident of the state, has been a lawyer and accountant for the past 30 years. His father was a schoolteacher and one of his grandfathers, who came from Italy, carved marble when the West Virginia Capitol was under construction. Poore, also a native West Virginian and a lawyer, was appointed in December 2009 to the House of Delegates seat held by Carrie Webster when she was named a Kanawha County circuit judge. She has represented much of downtown, the East End and the West Side since then. “Are we really hitting the issue of poverty in West Virginia?” Poore asked Monday. “We support coal and gas and oil. But we also have people who want to start mom-and-pop shops. We are ignoring them.”

Water specialist won't drink the water One water treatment specialist said Monday that Crude MCHM continues to be released by West Virginia American Water's carbon filters, and he won't drink the tap water until all 16 are replaced. “I knew that the filters at West Virginia American that removed the MCHM eventually are eventually going to desorb all of that material,” environmental engineer and chemist Dayton Carpenter told the Rotary Club of Charleston. “And sure enough as they're doing the testing right now, it is desorbing. It's going out into the system at very low concentration. But to me, we're talking months.” Test results made public in March showed that trace amounts of MCHM were detected in treated water coming from the facility, but spokeswoman Laura Jordan told the Gazette that “wasn't unexpected,” in an earlier report. The water company started changing its filters two weeks ago. Jordan said Monday that two have been completely replaced and samples taken from those filters show no trace of Crude MCHM -- the coal processing chemical that leaked into the Elk River in January, contaminating the drinking water for 300,000 Kanawha Valley residents. Carpenter is president of Carpenter Treatment Solutions, LLC, and has designed water treatment facilities for 35 years. He is also a licensed remediation specialist for hazardous waste remediation at brownfield sites. Carpenter wrote multiple newspaper editorials during the water crisis, because he “couldn't sit on the sidelines,” he said. He said one of his concerns in the days following the leak was the lack of information about Crude MCHM. “It seemed to be a pretty benign material until you start smelling licorice in your tap. And then your life changes,” Carpenter said. Carpenter said his first instinct would have been to close intakes at the treatment plant. But, West Virginia American Water's distribution, which includes many systems Carpenter designed, wouldn't allow for that, he said.

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

W.Va. utility: 2 changed filters show no chemical The water company impacted by a January chemical spill says water treated with two replaced filters shows no chemical contamination. However, the company still has six or seven weeks-worth of changing 14 other filters found to contain traces of a spilled chemical. The chemical found in treated water late last month was 2,000 times less concentrated than federal health officials deem safe to drink. West Virginia American Water began replacing filters April 1 after finding trace chemicals were flowing off them into the distribution system for 300,000 people. The company has said previous tests couldn't detect the chemical at such low concentrations. The company says new filters will cost more than \$1 million. The Jan. 9 chemical spill at Freedom Industries spurred a tap-water ban for up to 10 days.

Contractor releases Freedom Industries spill site remediation plan CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A

contractor hired to remediate the Elk River site of a chemical leak recently submitted its plan to the state Department of Environmental Protection. The key word is plan — with many of the details still up in the air as the Freedom Industries location remains largely unchanged since officials discovered chemicals leaking in early January. “As indicated (in the report), much information will be determined once the tanks are removed from the release area and the site characterization can be completed,” states the report, created by Pittsburgh-based Civil & Environmental Consulting LLC. On Jan. 9, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection discovered at least 10,000 gallons of MCHM and other chemicals leaking from a faulty storage tank owned by Freedom Industries. An unknown amount of the chemical seeped through a wall and into the Elk River, eventually overwhelming the local water treatment facility and contaminating tap water for 300,000 West Virginia residents. The DEP ordered Freedom to clean up the spill and the site. Freedom hired CEC days after the spill to help with the entire site remediation plan. Earlier this year the company released its tank deconstruction plan. The 14-page document outlines how the company plans to move forward with tearing down the 17 tanks on site. That’s started already, with six of the fiberglass tanks slated for deconstruction late last week, said DEP spokeswoman Kelly Gillenwater. The tank that leaked, Tank 396, will remain intact until the U.S. Chemical Safety Board arrives on site next week to take portions of the tank wall.

Event to discuss urban trail system An upcoming event will teach Charleston residents how to manage a large trail system near an urban area. David Gordon, coordinator of the Ridge to Rivers trail system outside Boise, Idaho, will speak at the 23rd installment of the Charleston Area Alliance’s “Think Tank” series April 30. The event was discussed at a Charleston Land Trust board meeting Monday evening. Bill Mills, a member of the Land Trust board who travels to Boise often, said he has been asking Gordon to come to Charleston to speak for some time. Mills said Gordon’s trip will be possible through a grant through the West Virginia Land Trust. “I’ve been so blown away by what they’ve done,” Mills said. Boise’s Ridge to Rivers system includes more than 150 miles of multi-use trails just outside Boise city limits. The trail system is operated under a partnership by several government entities, including the city, Ada County (Idaho), the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Forest Service and the federal Bureau of Land Management.

BECKLEY REGISTER-HERALD

Be prepared for disaster Do you have the things you need to survive a long power outage? What about a flood? Would you say you’re ready if disaster hits? If you’re not, you’re in the same boat as many people today, officials say. To help people be ready for anything, the Disaster Preparedness Fair was started and it’s in its second year. “We went through so many disasters just locally and major disasters,” Fayette County Emergency Preparedness Planner Theresa White said. “We have had 14 disasters in Fayette County since 2001. That’s a massive amount to go through. The people that come through each one seem like they’re no more prepared than they were the last time.

HUNTINGTON HERALD DISPATCH

Women's club to host tree-planting ceremony HUNTINGTON -- The Women's Club of Huntington will hosting a tree-planting ceremony at 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, at Ritter Park to celebrate Earth Day. The group will be joined by Huntington mayor Steve Williams, who will

help plant the donated sugar maple tree at the park. The event is free and open to the public. Those attending should meet at the Ritter Park fountain area.

WEST VIRGINIA STATE JOURNAL

WV American Water: No trace of MCHM in treatment plant After some allegations of crude MCHM remaining in the water treatment plant, West Virginia American Water said in an April 14 news release samples from its filters have come back at non-detect levels. The water company has been in the process of replacing its carbon filters in the Kanawha Valley water treatment plant, something it said it does, but had never done at the caliber with which it has proceeded with after the chemical spill that affected nine counties. According to the water company, samples taken from the first two filters completed in the carbon change-out project showed "no detection of MCHM." The company said in a statement 16 water samples from various stages in the water treatment process over a five hour period were tested --- sent to Eurofins Lancaster Laboratories, Inc. -- a lab used by the WV TAP (West Virginia Testing Assessment Project) team brought into the state by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin. The test results have been shared with the West Virginia National Guard, West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and the WV TAP team. "The filters are being put back into services, and testing will be conducted on filtered water following each subsequent filter change-out," according to a press release from the water company. "Testing is performed down to a .38 parts per billion reporting level, which is the lowest existing detection level to date."

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

Drilling On Lake Property Possible PIEDMONT, Ohio - Members of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District may allow Denver-based Antero Resources to drill for Utica Shale natural gas on nearly 6,700 acres of Piedmont Lake property in Belmont and Harrison counties as early as Friday. "Financial terms still are being negotiated. According to our staff, there will be a maximum of two well pads that will be located on district property," spokesman Darrin Lautenschleger said Monday, adding that the district's board of directors will consider Antero's proposal during the regular meeting set for Friday in New Philadelphia. Thousands of ambitious fishermen hoping to hook a catfish, walleye, bass or muskie - along with children participating in 4-H and school-related activities - head to Piedmont Lake every year. The vast majority of the lake itself lies in northwestern Belmont County, while it stretches into southern Harrison County and the extreme northeastern corner of Guernsey County. Along with Piedmont, the district manages several large eastern Ohio lakes, including Tappan, Clendening and Seneca lakes.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Diesel tank leaks in Columbia Howard County and Maryland Department of the Environment officials are investigating a fuel spill that impacted a lake in Columbia Monday. Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services personnel responded to a hazardous materials incident in the 5600 block of Vantage Point Road around 4 p.m. Monday, according to a news release. A diesel fuel tank leaked, and reached a storm drain system that leads to Lake Kittamanqundi, the release said. MDE responded and will oversee cleanup with help from a private contractor, the

release said.

Shale gas limits debated Scientist urges more distance between water wells, drilling rigs. Maryland regulators are weighing some of the strictest limits in the country on shale gas drilling, but a scientist Monday suggested they still may not go far enough to protect drinking water wells from contamination by methane leaking from drilling sites. Gas drilling rigs would generally have to be at least 2,000 feet from public or private water wells under rules being considered by the Maryland Department of the Environment, officials said Monday during a meeting of the governor's advisory commission on the issue. But Avner Vengosh, a researcher at Duke University, told commission members that studies he and his colleagues have done in states bordering Maryland and elsewhere found that domestic water wells were more likely to be fouled with potentially explosive levels of methane gas if they were within one kilometer — 3,280 feet — of a drilling rig. Water wells farther away rarely had problems, he said. "If I were in your position, I would try to be as cautious as possible," Vengosh said. The debate over well protections came as the advisory commission nears the end of a three-year study of the promise and potential problems associated with drilling for natural gas in shale formations beneath western Maryland. While thousands of shale gas wells have been drilled in neighboring Pennsylvania alone, supporting tens of thousands of jobs, the O'Malley administration has put drilling on hold until it can determine whether it can be done safely, citing concerns about environmental and health impacts. The 15-member panel is expected to issue a draft final report by the end of June.

ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL -GAZETTE

Democratic gov. candidates push alternative energy; Republicans question cost Maryland's Democratic gubernatorial candidates agree alternative energy resources are important for growing a sustainable economy. But Attorney General Doug Gansler and Delegate Heather Mizeur, D-Montgomery, are calling for the state to develop more alternative energy resources than Gov. Martin O'Malley's administration has planned. The O'Malley administration's goal is to have the state spend 20 percent of its electricity purchases on renewable sources by 2022, including two percent from solar energy. "But when it comes to protecting our environment and investing in Maryland's renewable energy economy, we must aim higher," Gansler said in a written response to a Capital News Service questionnaire for major Democratic and Republican gubernatorial candidates. Gansler and Mizeur said they want to see 40 percent of Maryland's electricity purchases from alternative sources, including solar, biomass and windmills, by 2025. Lt. Governor Anthony Brown said the O'Malley administration has already made significant strides in promoting alternative energy, including the Maryland Offshore Wind Energy Act. The act offers incentives for developing up to 500 megawatts of offshore wind capacity. Brown also said the effort to increase solar energy has already resulted in 2,000 new jobs and by 2018, he expects another 8,000 jobs. "We will continue to promote the growth of both of these industries, which protect our environment while creating domestic employment," he said. Gansler said he thinks one way to promote renewable energy in Maryland is to provide incentives for utility companies to create or purchase certain kinds of renewable sources.

CARROL COUNTY TIMES

Westminster authorizes mayor to sign stormwater memorandum, with conditions The Westminster Common Council voted Monday to allow Mayor Kevin Utz to sign a stormwater

management memorandum of understanding at a meeting Thursday, provided certain conditions are met and the proposed memorandum is circulated among the council members for consensus beforehand. A draft MOU was distributed to the municipalities in late March. The draft contained how much the county would pay for stormwater projects versus the municipalities, which was set, respectively, at 80 percent and 20 percent.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND NEWS

It was 'A Most Convenient Place' for Earth Day When Maryland's Governor and Council ordered land to be purchased from Mayor of St. Mary's City Phillip Lynes in 1708 at Shepherds Old Fields for a courthouse on a bluff overlooking "Brittons Bay," they called that location the "most convenient place." That's probably because of its central location in St. Mary's County. The physical location of what was to become Leonardtown probably didn't hurt, with that natural harbor and hill to roll the tobacco hogsheads down to be shipped out. Aleck Loker called his town history "A Most Convenient Place" and the town has adopted it as a motto. But those practical considerations cannot overlook the more emotional attachment that must have been a consideration for its establishment as a town more than 300 years ago and down to this very day. It is also a "Most Beautiful Place." The body of water at the foot of the hill is now called Breton Bay. It was in 1708 and is today the anchor of the town's sense of place. Today what historically was a commercial center of activity is now a park to be enjoyed by all. It also was one of the two venues Sunday for Leonardtown's annual Earth Day celebration of the land, air and water. At the wharf there were canoe and kayak rides from Patuxent Adventure Center, a plyometric training exercise circuit from St. Mary's MD Dream Basketball, a moon bounce for the kids and ice cream for all from Spider Hill Farms Organic Ice Cream. The courthouse now anchors the hillside location that comprises downtown Leonardtown, the Earth Day second venue. The town was filled with vendors, many with wares focused on the environment, community groups, entertainers and plenty of food and drink. April weather in Leonardtown can often be iffy but this time Mother Nature cooperated with sunny skies and warm temperatures to bring out the crowds to that Most Convenient Place and Most Beautiful Place.

Port Tobacco man honored nationally for conservation work Field & Stream, the world's leading outdoor magazine, has named Ed Nicholson of Port Tobacco, Md., a Hero of Conservation in its April issue, on newsstands and available at fieldandstream.com/heroes now. As part of the honor he will receive a \$500 grant from Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., Field & Stream's Heroes of Conservation partner. Munhollon will also join 26 other Heroes in the running to win a new Toyota Tundra pickup truck and the title of 2014 Conservation Hero of the Year. "Hunters and fishermen have never been afraid to roll up their sleeves and get to work in the name of protecting America's wildlife and wild places, and Ed is a great example of that ethos hard at work," says Anthony Licata, Editorial Director of Field & Stream. "Conservation is and will always be an integral part of hunting and fishing, and volunteers like Ed are crucial to keeping our traditions alive for generations to come." Nicholson founded Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Inc. after flyfishing with wounded soldiers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 2005. The nonprofit, for which he continues to serve as a volunteer, has grown to encompass 158 programs in 48 states. In partnership with other angling groups, PHWFF provides on-the-water experiences, as well as rod-building and fly-tying workshops inside hospitals and VA centers, to 4,000 injured warriors and disabled veterans each year. "Flyfishing is an incredible medium for healing the bodies and minds of wounded soldiers, but the friendships that are formed facilitate

healing that much more,” says Nicholson, who served in the Navy for 30 years. “Toyota’s commitment to the environment goes beyond our products, emphasizing sustainability across our business units and in the community,” said Steve Appelbaum, National Manager, Engagement Marketing. “That said, we are honored to recognize these individuals’ efforts on a national level through our long-standing relationship with Field & Stream. Conserving our natural resources would not be possible without all the people who make time in their busy lives to fuel their passion for protecting and preserving the environment.”

CHESAPEAKE BAY JOURNAL

Blog: Cherry blossoms bring tourists, loads of trash to D.C. D.C. trash crews were overwhelmed with an influx of tourists this weekend as the cherry blossoms bloomed. My husband and I had just flown back into Reagan National Airport in Alexandria on Sunday afternoon to be greeted by the cherry blossoms — and tourism season — in full bloom. It's a lovely sight, if you're not stuck in a taxi trying to get home. When we did finally make it home, we decided we couldn't miss out on the perfect weather-blossoms combination. We took our taxi driver's word that the "cherry blossoms are 100-percent full bloom today" and metroed in to join the tourists in downtown D.C. The cherry blossoms, though late for the city's annual festival in their honor, were all they were advertised to be. Giant clusters of light pink blooms played backdrop to thousands of tourists (and locals like us) and their pictures. We watched little girls and boys climb into the trees to surround themselves with the clusters, couples canoodling against their trunks and groups picnicking beneath their shade. And we saw trash. Lots of trash. Nearly every receptacle along the National Mall was piled high and overflowing with trash. The light breeze that makes cherry blossoms into springtime confetti blew some of the trash across the just-green grass and gravel walkways. It looked as though people picnicking had just left their waste or perhaps thrown it into the air — was this some sort of foreign springtime ritual? Trash the Mall on Cherry Blossom Day?

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

EPA to drill wells to investigate Sandston pollution The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will drill test wells in the Sandston area to get a better understanding of groundwater pollution there, a spokeswoman said Monday. The drilling will occur in late spring or early summer, said EPA spokeswoman Bonnie Smith. “We are still very early in the investigation,” Smith said. The probe could last months. The EPA is investigating whether people in a roughly one-block area at East Williamsburg Road and Garland Avenue are threatened by tetrachloroethene, an industrial chemical suspected of causing cancer. The EPA is examining that area because a contractor’s nearby test well found high concentrations of the chemical in groundwater. EPA officials left fliers in the area in January telling residents about the pollution and investigation. The EPA has determined there is no need for emergency action such as trucking in drinking water, Smith said. People in the area under investigation drink county water, not well water. “Safe drinking water is not an issue at this place,” Smith said. Workers for the EPA tested water in a small number of wells outside the study area, and they tested the air in places including the crawl spaces of several homes, but they did not find concentrations of the chemical high enough to pose health

concerns, Smith said. Now the agency will attempt to find the source and extent of the underground pollution. "We looked at short-term concerns" early in the investigation, Smith said. The plan now is "to assess any potential long-term concerns." Options down the road range from a cleanup if pollution is found at levels that pose health concerns to leaving the chemicals in the ground if they are not in unhealthy concentrations. "We need to identify the extent of the contamination and at that point to determine what needs to be done," Smith said.

Letter: Ignoring problems never solves them Your news stories about Superfund sites and various hazardous waste sites in Virginia point out a telling problem. Virginia has no idea how many sites are out there or their threat to human health or the environment. If you don't look, then you have no clue. I worked in New Jersey's Superfund program in the 1980s and early 1990s. New Jersey, as many other states, has actively looked for and investigated potentially hazardous sites since the 1970s. It has a large database of known and suspected sites around the state. These include gas stations, dry cleaners, metal plating operations, leaking oil tanks at homes, old landfills, major industrial sites, etc. Every military base is a potential major Superfund site due to what they handled and past practices. I worked at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) from 2002 until 2006 as a consultant in the Air Program. During that time, I had DEQ staff ask me how to deal with and evaluate cleanup options for remediating hazardous sites because they had no idea. How do you know if citizens are at risk, if you have no clue what the exposures are or where they're located? I also learned that DEQ does not do anything to protect Virginia's citizens or the environment, unless the EPA requires it. It is time that Virginia wakes up and realizes it can't keep putting its head in the sand hoping that nothing happens. It's time to stop ignoring the obvious and find out what's out there.

CHARLOTTESVILLE DAILY PROGRESS

Ivy station's future up in the air People in Albemarle County who don't want to pay a private company to haul away their trash have one option, and that could be tossed too. The open-air Ivy Materials Utilization Center faces possible closure next year by the state Department of Environmental Quality. The trash transfer station has been operating continuously for more than a decade on the site of a closed landfill. Most localities Albemarle's size operate five to seven manned trash collection sites, known as convenience centers, said Graham Simmerman, a waste compliance and permitting manager for the DEQ's Valley region. Albemarle has none. Supervisors in February abandoned a plan to add three privately run convenience centers around the county after Mill Creek area residents in southern Albemarle said they did not want such a facility near them. Before that, foes of a convenience center considered for a seven-acre tract off Esmont Road in Keene helped scuttle that plan, raising concerns traffic would back up on Route 20. Building the convenience centers would have cost \$400,000 to \$500,000 apiece, but operating expenses would have been far lower than at the transfer station, officials said. The county pays \$375,000 a year under a contract extended earlier this year with the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority, which operates the Ivy station. Earlier this month, supervisors voted to keep the Ivy facility open for three to five years, while the board and staff decide what to do with county trash in the long term. Supervisor Liz Palmer said she would like to see Ivy stay open as both a convenience center and transfer station, with a long-term goal of increasing recycling in the county. "I look at this as an interim solution, because to do something more is probably going to take us 10 years," she said. Only a facility that receives part of its trash from haulers and then consolidates and reloads it to be shipped to a final disposal site is considered a transfer

station, according to a federal Environmental Protection Agency manual. A convenience center is a place where people discard their own trash and recyclables to be hauled away to another site. Convenience centers are considered unsuitable for use as transfer stations because they typically can't handle large volumes of trash, according to the EPA manual. However, transfer stations also can include convenience centers on site.

FREDERICKSBURG FREELANCE STAR

Almost 100 people showed up at Supervisor Ruby Brabo's town-hall for Shore presentation

Almost 100 people showed up at Supervisor Ruby Brabo's town-hall meeting Monday night, and many wanted to know more about a company's plan to drill for natural gas in the region. Officials with Shore Exploration and Production tried to allay fears about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a process that injects high volumes of water, chemicals and sand deep into the ground to fracture rock and release trapped gas. Edmund DeJarnette Jr., chairman of Shore's board, stressed several times that he doesn't favor using water during the fracking process. He prefers nitrogen because it eliminates the need to haul thousands of gallons of water to the site and then truck the wastewater away. He's been to several meetings where people have said that hydraulic fracturing is dangerous, and he pointed out those concerns are irrelevant because that method of fracking is not part of the company's plans. "Everybody clear about that?" he asked. But DeJarnette acknowledged that his company may not have the final say-so in what kind of drilling is done. Shore has leased more than 84,000 acres in five counties south and east of Fredericksburg—and the company plans to sell part or all of the leases to a larger company that would run the drilling operations. Several residents asked if Shore could guarantee that nitrogen or some kind of gas fracking would be used in this region and not hydrofracking. Not as long as Shore controlled the matter, DeJarnette said, but then he admitted he doesn't have much time left. "I'm five months into a six- to eight-month life expectancy," he told the crowd. "I can tell you I have no intention of using anything but a gas frack." John Perkins, one of several residents with questions for Shore, said the crowd "wasn't ganging up on" the gas company, just looking for answers._

Letter: Fracking story should be a 'wake-up call' Thank you, FLS, for the reality check on fracking ["'Almost heaven' or fracking hell?" April 6]. You did a first-rate job of showing what this method of gas extraction has done to environment, roads and lives in West Virginia. Surely even some individuals who've culled cash from fracking agreements will wonder in the end if it was worth it. In the perennial tug of war between corporate greed and the health of people and the environment, money nearly always has the last word. It will continue to have the last word until the people demand a stop. Your story--a prize-worthy piece of reporting--is a wake-up call for resolve._

NORTHERN VIRGINIA DAILY

Strasburg gets more aid for sewer plant Strasburg may not need to raise sewer rates to cover the cost to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. Town Council learned this week that Strasburg should receive \$5.7 million in grant money to spend toward expanding the facility. The town needs to upgrade the plant to comply with stricter state and federal environmental regulations. Strasburg leaders recently approved a contract with English Construction to build the plant upgrade for \$20.62 million. The contract also includes the construction of a new Department of Public Works facility in the North Shenandoah Industrial and Business Park at a cost of nearly

\$4 million. The town already received good news about the loan it must take out for the project. Strasburg can borrow the \$17 million needed for the project at zero interest for 25 years. Town Manager Judson Rex said Friday the low cost of the project and the higher grant amount have prompted officials to revisit sewer rates. Rex wouldn't say for certain if the lower cost to the town would translate in no rate increase for next year. The town had estimated that it would need to raise sewer rates over time to cover the debt payments on the project. "That's something that we're looking at right now," Rex said. Town officials plan to present a proposed fiscal 2015 budget to council Monday. Council may consider options on sewer rates. Initially, when the town began work on the project, officials estimated Strasburg would need to pay about \$810,000 on annual loan payments. "So, with the additional grant money, the zero percent for 25 years, we feel that annual debt service that we were anticipating is going to be a lot less, maybe around \$700,000," Rex said. "That translates into some good savings, and we have other sewer projects and needs but we think that's going to translate into at least being able to keep our rates where they are."

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

UN Panel: Still Time to Avert Worst of Climate Change, but World Must Act The worst global effects from climate change can still be averted, but only if countries act quickly, according to the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC's summary report on greenhouse gas emissions charts multiple pathways for action on the national and international levels that would help keep the worldwide temperature rise under 2 degrees Celsius this century and sees minimal impact on economic growth

GREENWIRE

Gender pay gap persists across government -- OPM report There's still a gender pay gap in the federal government. Women working in white-collar jobs across the federal government in 2012 were paid 87 cents for every dollar that a man was paid, according to a report issued last week by the Office of Personnel Management. That pay gap still marks an improvement in recent years, the report showed. In 1992, women in the federal workforce made 70 cents for every dollar a man made. "This is a significant improvement over the past 20 years," OPM Director Katherine Archuleta wrote last week in a blog post. "But while our report shows the progress that we've made, we won't be satisfied until women working in federal jobs earn the same as their male counterparts, at every level." The report was issued the same week that President Obama signed orders aimed at increasing pay transparency and limiting the gender wage gap for federal contractors. A Democratic-led effort to advance equal pay legislation that would apply to the broader workforce faltered in the Senate last week in the face of GOP opposition (Greenwire, April 8).

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pipeline would pass through hundreds of waterways LOUISVILLE, Ky. — U.S Army Corps of Engineers documents show that a planned pipeline project in Kentucky would affect more than

750 rivers, streams, wetlands and ponds during construction. The proposed Bluegrass Pipeline would carry natural gas liquids through more than a dozen Kentucky counties on the way to the Gulf of Mexico. The Courier-Journal in Louisville obtained a wetlands destruction permit submitted to the Corps of Engineers in December with a Freedom of Information Act request. The permit says the construction would require digging trenches through most of the waterways or drilling underneath others, as well as maintaining a 50-foot cleared right of way. "Impacts on water bodies crossed by the project would be temporary," the pipeline project asserted in an initial wetlands-destruction permit application to the Corps dated Dec. 30, 2013. "As proposed, the project will not result in a permanent loss of wetlands."

NEW YORK TIMES

Blog: White House Pressed to Protect Ailing Monarch Butterflies All too often, species that humans care about only get attention when they are in crisis. Such is the case with monarch butterflies. The insect, famed for its remarkable annual migrations, faced declines in habitat on both the Mexican and American ends of its range for decades, but now is the focus of an urgent push for a rescue. The latest step is a letter sent on Monday to President Obama and relevant cabinet members by a group of scientists, educators, farmers, and other concerned citizens organized by the Xerces Society and other conservation groups focused on these butterflies. The letter (read it here) describes policies the administration could pursue on both public and private land along the butterfly's migratory path. In February, after about 20 naturalists, poets and other monarch defenders pressed for international action in an open letter, the plight of the butterfly was addressed by President Obama and his Mexican and Canadian counterparts at a summit.

NATIONAL JOURNAL

How Many Jobs Does Fracking Really Create? Fracking creates jobs. That's the linchpin of the oil and gas industry argument for permitting the controversial drilling practice. And it's become the industry's trump card as the debate rages—among policymakers and scientists—over whether fracking is safe for the people and environment around it. Getting an exact count of how many people collect paychecks as a result of fracking, however, is more art than science, and in many cases—particularly when it comes time for industry backers and politicians to tout the practice—a close look at the numbers shows that some of the largest estimates are based on the most generous economic assumptions. Take Pennsylvania, a state at the center of the fracking boom. It sits atop the Marcellus shale, the largest rock formation of its kind in the U.S., and has seen a surge in shale gas production. Natural-gas production in Pennsylvania increased by 72 percent from 2011 to 2012, the largest jump out of all the major gas-producing states.

LA TIMES

EPA drastically underestimates methane released at drilling sites Drilling operations at several natural gas wells in southwestern Pennsylvania released methane into the atmosphere at rates that were 100 to 1,000 times greater than federal regulators had estimated, new research shows. Using a plane that was specially equipped to measure greenhouse gas emissions in the air, scientists found that drilling activities at seven well pads in the booming Marcellus shale formation emitted 34 grams of methane per second, on average. The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that such drilling releases between 0.04 grams and 0.30 grams of methane per second. The study, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, adds to a growing body of research that suggests the EPA is gravely underestimating

methane emissions from oil and gas operations. The agency is expected to issue its own analysis of methane emissions from the oil and gas sector as early as Tuesday, which will give outside experts a chance to assess how well regulators understand the problem. Carbon dioxide released by the combustion of fossil fuels is the biggest contributor to climate change, but methane — the chief component of natural gas — is about 20 to 30 times more potent when it comes to trapping heat in the atmosphere. Methane emissions make up 9% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions and are on track to increase, according to the White House. The Pennsylvania study was launched in an effort to understand whether the measurements of airborne methane matched up with emissions estimates based on readings taken at ground level, the approach the EPA and state regulators have historically used. Researchers flew their plane about a kilometer above a 2,800 square kilometer area in southwestern Pennsylvania that included several active natural gas wells. Over a two-day period in June 2012, they detected 2 grams to 14 grams of methane per second per square kilometer over the entire area. The EPA's estimate for the area is 2.3 grams to 4.6 grams of methane per second per square kilometer. Since their upper-end measurements were so much higher than the EPA's estimates, the researchers attempted to follow the methane plumes back to their sources, said Paul Shepson, an atmospheric chemist at Purdue University who helped lead the study. In some cases, they were able to quantify emissions from individual wells. The researchers determined that the wells leaking the most methane were in the drilling phase, a period that has not been known for high emissions. Experts had thought that methane was more likely to be released during subsequent phases of production, including hydraulic fracturing, well completion or transport through pipelines.